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TAGS: [ECON](#) [SENV](#) [UNCSD](#) [UNEP](#)
SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE RIFT BETWEEN UNFCCC AND
SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN

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Classified By: Ambassador Richard T. Miller.
Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Comments to the media March 21 by Yvo de Boer, Executive Director of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat in Bonn, fly in the face of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's directives quashing the idea

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of a "climate change summit" and have sparked a frenzy in UN corridors. A well-placed UN Secretariat source with inside knowledge of the SYG's March 20 meeting with De Boer and other UN officials (including from UNEP and UNDP) said that Ban was firm in saying there was "not much appetite" and "no majority support" internationally for a summit. De Boer and UNEP reps reportedly conceded the point, but urged the SYG not to "kill momentum" with a definitive dismissal. The SYG replied that he will continue to "call for action" on climate change at the upcoming G-8 summit and at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development's 15th Session in May. To maintain momentum, the SYG also agreed to appoint three envoys (one each from Latin America, Europe and Asia) to "rally support for political action." But the SYG was firm in saying the envoys would not be permitted to lobby for or promote the idea of a summit, nor to discuss a "post-2012 framework" or in any way be partisan regarding what climate actions states should take. To be effective, the envoys must be neutral. UNFCCC and UNEP, in conjunction with UNDP and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, are tasked with drafting "Terms of Reference" for the envoys by March 30.

¶2. (C) Yvo de Boer's March 21 comments to Reuters that Ban's envoys would "explore the possibility of a high-level meeting... possibly on the margins of the UN General Assembly" therefore came as a "shock" to senior UN officials, including Under-Secretary-General Jose Antonio Ocampo, according to the UN source. The source noted that de Boer's statement not only contradicts the SYG's directives, but also now undermines the credibility of whoever is selected to be the envoys. (Note: Under-Secretary-General Ocampo, who leaves office in June, is reportedly interested in being the Latin envoy. End note.) The source offered to share the written minutes of the SYG's March 20 meeting as soon as they are available.

¶3. (C) Comment: De Boer's press statements were instant grist for the UN rumor mill given widespread understanding that he is significantly out of step with both the SYG and majority sentiments among national delegations. It remains to be seen if the SYG's spokesperson or de Boer himself will be forced to retract or "clarify" their position in the aftermath. The SYG's spokesperson did not address the topic on March 21.
WOLFF